

Overview Information

Federal Agency

Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Ocean Service

Funding Opportunity Title

National Marine Sanctuary Program
Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program

Announcement Type

Modification

Funding Opportunity Number

Z-RIN 0648-ZB48

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

CFDA 11429
Marine Sanctuary Program

Dates

Applications must be received by the Program Manager between
January 28, 2004 and March 31, 2004 at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time

Overview Content

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program provides support for independent graduate-level studies in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, particularly by women and members of minority groups. Individuals who have been admitted to a graduate program and are U.S. citizens may apply for the scholarship. Scholarship selections are based on financial need, academic excellence, recommendations, and research and career goals. Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships may provide, subject to appropriations, support of up to \$32,000 per student: a 12-month stipend of \$20,000 in addition to a tuition allowance of up to \$12,000. A maximum of \$64,000 may be provided to masters students (up to 2 years of support) and up to \$128,000 may be provided to doctoral students (up to 4 years of support). Up to 5 scholarships may be awarded. Information about the scholarship can be obtained from the web site: www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program is authorized at 16 U.S.C. 1445c-1 to recognize outstanding scholarship in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, particularly by women and members of minority groups, and encourages independent graduate-level research through financial support of graduate studies in such fields. Gender and minority status are not considered when selecting award recipients. However, special outreach efforts are employed to solicit applications from women and minorities. Scholarships are distributed by disciplines, institutions and geography, and by degree sought, with selections within distributions based on financial need, the potential for success in a graduate level studies program, and the potential for achieving research and career goals. The program is administered through NOAA's National Ocean Service and is funded annually with 1% of the amount appropriated each fiscal year to carry out the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

II. Award Information

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships may provide, subject to appropriations, support of up to \$32,000 per student: a 12-month stipend of \$20,000 in addition to a tuition allowance of up to \$12,000. A maximum of \$64,000 may be provided to masters students (up to two years of support) and up to \$128,000 may be provided to doctoral students (up to four years of support). Up to 5 awards may be made.

The annual stipend will be paid directly to the scholar. The stipend is intended to defray cost-of-living expenses, and not to support research costs. NOAA anticipates the student and their faculty advisor will secure research funds independent of the scholarship. Tuition and academic fees will be negotiated between the academic institution and the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship program manager at NOAA prior to the receipt of funds. This negotiation is intended to leverage scholarship funds and enhance opportunities for scholarship recipients. In those instances in which tuition and academic fees are not totally waived by the academic institution, the tuition allowance in an amount equal to the tuition and fees not waived (but not to exceed \$12,000) will be paid directly to the scholar for remittance to the academic institution. If tuition and fees are reduced or waived by the academic institution, then that portion of the tuition allowance not needed (i.e., up to \$12,000 in the case of a total waiver) will be retained by NOAA for future scholarships. No money will be paid directly to the student from the tuition allowance for purposes other than the payment of tuition and fees.

Specific instructions regarding the disbursement, management, and reporting requirements for all stipend and tuition allowance payments will be provided to the scholarship recipients upon selection for the award. The awarding of funds beyond the first year will be based on availability of funds, continued eligibility of the student, periodic certification by the academic institution that adequate academic progress is being made, and compliance with applicable reporting requirements. At its discretion, each academic institution may supplement a scholar's stipend from institutional funds in accordance with the supplementation policy of the institution.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants -- Only United States citizens currently pursuing or intending to pursue a masters or doctoral level degree in oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology, including the curation, preservation, and display of maritime artifacts are eligible for an award under this scholarship program. Prospective scholars do not need to be enrolled,

but must be admitted to a graduate level program in order to apply for this scholarship. Recipients of scholarship awards may be employed at the time of the award if it is a requirement of their degree program or directly related to their research effort. Other forms of employment will not be allowed and scholars will be required to submit a letter certifying that they are in compliance with this requirement. Eligibility must be maintained for each succeeding year of support and annual reporting requirements, to be specified at a later date, will apply.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching -- There are no matching requirements for this award.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package -- Information on the application package and what it should contain can be found on the web site at www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov. Information in hard copy may be requested from: Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, Attention: Office of the Assistant Administrator, 13th Floor, National Ocean Service, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission -- Each application package must include the following items: Failure to submit these items exactly as described in each section below will disqualify the application from consideration.

(I) General Information Sheet

Personal Data: Provide your full name, country of citizenship, current address, permanent address, and home and work telephone numbers. If you can be reached by fax or e-mail, include that information. Optional – for statistical collection purposes only: indicate your gender, and race or ethnicity.

Degree Sought: State your proposed field of study (oceanography, marine biology, or maritime archaeology) and degree type you are seeking (e.g. M.S., M.A., Ph.D.). Include the month and year you expect the degree to be awarded. State the name and location of your institution.

Education: List the academic degrees you have received, or expect to receive by the start of your proposed graduate studies for this program, including the date of receipt and institution.

Statement of Financial Need: In a concise paragraph, discuss how you plan to fund your graduate level education. Provide the estimated amount needed for tuition and fees. List all resources currently available to you to cover your graduate studies (e.g., grants, student loans, scholarships, research or teaching assistant positions, personal funds). Indicate the length of time these resources will be available and if they include work requirements. List other sources to which you have applied, but have not received a response. Discuss what the impact would be on your graduate education if you do not receive this scholarship.

(II) Statement of Intent

The Statement of Intent is a self-description of your academic research and career goals, and how your proposed course of study or research will help you achieve these goals. This is your opportunity to present yourself, your beliefs, and your aspirations. Include any background information you believe is pertinent, and provide insight into why you have chosen

the goals you are pursuing. This statement should not be a research proposal or scientific abstract. This statement will be used to evaluate you as an individual, not necessarily as a scientist, and your motivation for applying for this scholarship. This statement should demonstrate your organizational, analytical, and written communication skills. The statement of intent should be typewritten, single-spaced on a blank sheet of paper, and should not exceed one page in length. Statements longer than one page will not be accepted and will result in the application being disqualified.

(III) Institute Certification

A letter from the applicant's institution certifying that the student is enrolled or has been accepted to a graduate program must be submitted with the application. The letter should consist of the following information on school letterhead and be signed by a school official: Name and location of the academic institution, the school and department that you are currently attending or plan to attend, and the month and year your studies will begin if you are not currently enrolled. If you have a graduate advisor, list his/her name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and an e-mail address, if available in the Institute Certification portion of your application. Current transcripts will not be accepted in lieu of the Institute Certification. Failure to include the Institute Certification specifically as indicated above will result in the application being disqualified.

(IV) Transcripts

Provide transcripts for all previous university/college level studies. Photocopied transcripts are acceptable. Transcripts must be included with all other application materials. Those mailed separately will not be accepted. Failure to include transcripts from all previous university/college-level studies will result in the application being disqualified.

(V) Three Letters of Recommendation

Each application must include three, and only three, signed letters of recommendation from individuals who have knowledge of your academic record, research effort, work and/or life experience. Relevant paid work, such as internships and volunteer efforts, is applicable. If you have a sponsor or advisor in the program, one of these letters should be from that individual. Letters of recommendation sent apart from the application will not be accepted. Applications without three, signed letters of recommendation or with more than three letters of recommendation will result in the application being disqualified.

(VI) Declaration

Applicants must certify that all statements and information in their application are true and correct by copying the following on a plain sheet of paper, signing it, and including it in their application:

I, the undersigned, declare, under penalty of perjury, that all statements and information in my application are true and correct.

Executed on [insert date] _____
Print or type Name _____
Signature _____

Failure to include this statement, signed by the applicant, will result in the application being disqualified.

3. Submission Dates and Times -- Applications must be received between January 28, and March 31, 2004 by 5:00 p.m. eastern standard time. Applications received prior to January 28 or after March 31, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. eastern standard time will not be reviewed or considered, and will be disqualified.

4. Other Submission Requirements -- Only hard copies of applications will be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria.

- (1) Academic record and statement of career goals and objectives of student (goals and objectives described in the Statement of Intent) (20%)
- (2) Research goals and applicability of program priorities (7%)
- (3) Recommendations and/or endorsements of students (18%)
- (4) Interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills (described in the Statement of Intent) (15%)
- (5) Financial need of student (40%)

2. Review and Selection Process - An initial administrative review of applications is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of applications. A panel of at least three NOAA experts will individually review and rate applications based on the evaluation criteria. A numerical ranking will be assigned to each application based on the average of the panel members ratings. The Selecting Official, the Associate Assistant Administrator for Management, will award in rank order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the selection factors below.

- (1) Balance/Distribution of Funds
 - a. Across academic disciplines (not applicable to this program)
 - b. By types of institution
 - c. Geographically
- (2) Availability of funds
- (3) Program-specific objectives
- (4) Degree in scientific area and type of degree sought

3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates - The names, academic institutions, degrees being sought, research plans, and biographical information of the scholarship awardees will be posted on the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program web site: www.fosterscholar.noaa.gov in mid-July. The information posted on the web site may also be published in marketing materials developed to advertise the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices - A hard copy congratulatory letter is sent to each successful applicant along with an award document describing the terms of the award and providing forms that the applicant must complete. These forms include the CD-346, Applicant for Funding Assistance; CD-511, Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying; and SF270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement. The award document must be signed and returned along with the completed forms listed above. The annual reporting requirements are also included in the award package.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

3. Reporting - Awardees are required to provide an annual report discussing the scholar's activities, accomplishments, academic progress and research progress. The report must include a certification from the scholar's academic advisor indicating that the student's work is on track.

4. Other Requirements -- The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register Notice published October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917) as amended by the Federal Register Notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109) are applicable to this solicitation.

5. Classification – This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). This application has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control number 0648-0432. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is 4.5 hours for an application and 45 minutes per letter of recommendation. These estimates include the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection-of-information subject to the PRA unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

6. Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

7. This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

8. Because notice and comment are not required under 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, for notices relating to public property, loans, grants, benefits or contracts, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, 5 U.S.C. 601 et seq is not required and has not been prepared for this notice.

Dated:
Alan Neuschatz,
Associate Assistant Administrator for Management
National Ocean Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

VII. Agency Contact

Potential applicants can e-mail questions to fosterscholars.noaa.gov The e-mail is forwarded to the Program Manager who answers questions on the scholarship.